



Northeast Hearth, Patio, and Barbecue Association

PO Box 28, Sudbury, MA 01776 . 978-440-0344 . nehpba.org

March 9, 2022

Housing Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Chairs Williams and Lopes,

On behalf of the Northeast Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association, I am offering written testimony in opposition as drafted of Connecticut Senate Bill SB 292, *AN ACT CONCERNING HEATING EFFICIENCY IN NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION AND MAJOR ALTERATIONS OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS*

The Northeast Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (NEHPBA) is a trade association representing more than 60 individual member retail and related companies throughout Connecticut supporting 350 families. The vast majority of our members are independent “mom and pop” small businesses who are significant community contributors in the markets they serve across the state. These are all independent and family-owned hearth shops chimney sweeps, installers, maintenance companies, and any other entity having a commercial interest in the hearth, patio and/or barbecue industry.

NEHPBA recognizes the changing landscape of the energy and fossil fuel industry. We are committed to working with government officials and regulators at all levels to increase access to more sustainable and climate centric fuel sources throughout our homes and businesses.

SB 292 proposes to prohibit the use of fossil fuel combustion systems as the primary source of heating, ventilation and air conditioning or water heating in new residential construction or in major alterations of residential buildings. We are opposed to the bill for the following reasons:

- Responsible legislation considers cost impacts on consumers, especially those in overburdened communities. This legislation will likely increase the cost of electricity as well as home construction. Additionally, this legislation will likely put out of business most of these small “mom and pop” family-owned businesses.
- Since most electric heat pumps (ie. minisplits) struggle to keep homes warm when temperatures plunge, it requires that traditional heating systems be used to ensure that the house can stay warm increasing utility costs and maintenance costs to residents.
- Propane is cleaner in Connecticut than electricity when you use a lifecycle analysis and far more efficient.
- As we saw this past January, during the coldest parts of the winter electric heat pumps and other electric appliances run on oil and coal generated electricity.
- Consumers should be able to choose the equipment and fuel they want to use to heat their home. Taking away consumer choice will drive up costs and reduce competition. As demand increases for heat pumps availability will decrease while cost increases.



Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association Affiliate



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- Energy security and diversity is critical if the state is going to be prepared in times of crisis, whether that be from power outages, winter storms, or world conflicts. Propane is the unsung hero of extreme weather events and without a strong market, citizens in CT will suffer.
- Annual maintenance on whole home heat pump systems can take an entire day, which increases the recommended annual maintenance costs by two to five times the cost of a traditional heating system (depending on the number of heads). Not to mention the cost it takes to maintain your secondary heating system.
- Pipeline infrastructure is 99.9% storm proof. We need to ensure that no CT residents are left in the cold without a heat source or are stuck with energy that is not reliable or affordable.
- All electric heat and air put elderly and low-income Connecticut residents at risk.
- Heat pumps only last fifteen to twenty years, where a traditional boiler can last thirty years or more. Parts to repair and maintain heat pumps are proprietary, unlike traditional heating and cooling systems that have parts that are interchangeable, making it harder and more costly to address problems with them.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,
Karen L Arpino

Karen L. Arpino

Executive Director
Northeast Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association